

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY DACCA
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, BG
SUBJECT: AWAMI LEAGUE COUNCIL MEETS, BEGUM TAJUDDIN EMERGES
AS COMPROMISE LEADER

1. THE FIRST FULL SCALE MEETING OF A MAJOR POLITICAL
PARTY SINCE PARTY ACTIVITY WAS PERMITTED BEGINNING LAST SUMMER
WAS THAT OF THE AWAMI LEAGUE COUNCIL HELD IN DACCA APRIL 3
AND 4. ABOUT 1200 DELEGATES ATTENDED THE SESSION, WHICH
UNDER THE CURRENT RULES WAS HELD "INDOORS", I.E., IN A
LARGE TENT.

2. BOTH IDEOLOGICAL AND PERSONALITY CLASHES HAVE
HINDERED THE PARTY IN FINDING A SINGLE LEADER AND A
COHERENT PROGRAM. FORMER MINISTER MATIUR RAHMAN AND
FORMER SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT MIZANUR RAHMAN CHOUDHURY
BOTH ASPIRE TO THE PRESIDENCY OF THE PARTY. MATIUR'S
CLAIMS STEM FROM HIS BEING ONE OF THE MOST SENIOR SURVIVING
AWAMI LEAGUERS STILL IN THE PARTY; MIZANUR'S FROM HIS ONE
TIME POSITION AS NUMBER TWO AT LEAST IN PROTOCOL TERMS.
MIZANUR AND MOLLA JALALUDDIN AHMAD WERE CONVENORS OF THE
COUNCIL MEETING. SEVERAL OTHER LEADERS INCLUDING ACTING
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GENERAL SECRETARY SAJEDA CHOUDHURY ARE IN JAIL AS A RESULT
OF ZIA'S NOVEMBER ARRESTS WHILE ACTING PRESIDENT MOHIUDDIN
AHMAD IS REPORTED TO BE UNDERGROUND AVOIDING ARREST.

3. THE TWO DAYS WERE SPENT TO SOME EXTENT IN A WRANGLER OVER
WHO WOULD LEAD THE PARTY AND THIS WAS ACCOMPANIED BY SEVERAL
WALKOUTS AND HOUSE TRADING SESSIONS. THE UPSHOT WAS THE

UNEXPECTED SELECTION OF BEGUM ZOHRA TAJUDDIN AHMAD AS
"CONVENOR" OF THE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE OF THE AWAMI LEAGUE.

4. MRS. AHMAD HAS NOT, SO FAR AS WE CAN DETERMINE, BEEN
PUBLICLY ACTIVE IN THE AWAMI LEAGUE SINCE THE MURDER OF HER
HUSBAND IN DACCA CENTRAL JAIL ON NOVEMBER 3, 1975,
NOR WAS SHE VERY ACTIVE IN EARLIER DAYS. ACCORDING TO A
NEWSPAPER BIOGRAPHIC OF JAJUDDIN WRITTEN IN 1974, SHE WAS
A MEMBER OF WOMEN'S AUXILIARIES TO THE AWAMI LEAGUE AND
"IS AN EDUCATED WOMAN AND HAS BEEN AN ASSET TO HER HUSBAND."

5. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER THE CHOICE OF A PRE-
SUMABLY "NEUTRAL" PERSON CAN KEEP TOGETHER THE ONE-TIME SECOND
RANK LEADERS OF THE LEAGUE WHO BY VIRTUE OF ASSASSINATION AND
DEFECTION ARE NOW THE SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE PARTY.
IT IS ALSO UNCLEAR WHETHER MRS. AHMAD SHARES THE LEFTIST, PRO-
SOVIET AND PRO-INDIAN VIEWS WHICH WERE ASCRIBED TO HER LATE
HUSBAND.

6. IN A RESOLUTION, THE COUNCIL DEMANDED GENERAL
ELECTIONS AND TRANSFER OF POWER TO ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES
OF THE PEOPLE. THE AWAMI LEAGUE THEREBY FORMALLY JOINS A
MEMBER OF OTHER PARTIES IN CALLING FOR ELECTIONS.
IT BELIEVES IT DOES SO WITH SOME PROSPECT OF FARING WELL
(PROVIDED ITS ORGANIZATION CAN HOLD TOGETHER) ON THE BASIS
THAT IT CLAIMS TO HAVE DONE REASONABLY WELL IN THE LOCAL
ELECTIONS HELD IN JANUARY. THE RESULTS OF THE JANUARY
ELECTION ARE STILL UNCLEAR AS NO FULL STUDY OF THE
MASSIVE DATA HAS YET BEEN DONE BY GOVERNMENT, ACADEMIC
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OR PRESS ANALYSTS. HOWEVER, IF THE AWAMI LEAGUE DID AS
WELL AS IT THINKS IT DID THIS WOULD, NO DOUBT, TEND TO
INHABIT ZIA FROM HOLDING EARLY ELECTION IN A PARLIAMENTARY
GOVERNMENT FRAMEWORK. THE AWAMI LEAGUE, GIVEN ITS HEAD,
IS UNLIKELY TO TREAT KINDLY THE ARMY WHICH OVERTHREW ITS
LEADER, MUJIB, WHOSE GARLANDED PORTRAIT GRACED THE DAIS
OF THE MEETING PLACE. OBEISANCE TO MUJIB AND THE OTHER
SLAIN LEADERS WAS A PROMINENT PART OF THE LITURGY OF THE
COUNCIL SESSION.

7. IN OTHER ACTIONS, THE COUNCIL DEMANDED RELEASE OF
POLITICAL PRISONERS, OPPOSED DIVESTMENT OF NATIONALIZED
INDUSTRIES AND DEPLORED RISING PRICES. MASTERS

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Message Attributes

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Sent Date: 05-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
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